
DE News



March 9, 2001 - Iowa Department of Education - Ted Stilwill, Director

From the Director's desk:

A status report on teacher quality

As many of you know, Republican legislative leaders released teacher quality bills this week, which have generated quite a bit of response from various groups.

The two bills, HSB 201 and SSB 1190, are identical. (You can see the actual language in each bill by going to the legislature's Web site: legis.state.ia.us.) Some components of the legislation are a product of the bipartisan legislative working group and the Pomerantz/Forsyth joint proposal. Other portions are significantly different or raise new issues, such as alternative licensure for administrators and teachers.

Please remember that these differences are an expected part of the legislative process. While we have concerns and are sharing those concerns with lawmakers and state leaders, we know that the legislation is still very much a work in progress.

The next major step in the process will come next week when Governor Vilsack will release his own teacher quality bill, which is expected to specifically address many of the publicized concerns about HSB 201/SSB 1190.

Key components in HSB 201/SSB 1190 include:

- **A mentoring/induction program for beginning teachers.** All beginning teachers will receive a two-year mentoring and induction program.
- **A new career path for teachers.** The bill includes a four-tiered career path. Participating school districts would be required to raise the minimum salary for a first-year beginning teacher by \$1,000 over

the prior year, if the district pays less than \$25,000. A second-year beginning teacher would receive a \$1,000 pay raise if his or her salary is below \$26,000. The current minimum salary for a beginning teacher is \$23,000. Career I teachers would earn at least \$2,000 more than the maximum beginning teacher salary. Participating districts would have one year to put in place a \$15,000 differential between the minimum Career I salary and the Advanced salary level.

Teachers would be placed on these salary levels based on evaluations by their supervisor and one additional evaluator. Administrators and other educators would be trained and certified on conducting comprehensive evaluations in a fair and equitable manner.

- **Team-based variable pay.** A legislative committee would establish a state framework to determine how growth in student performance would be measured toward variable pay. Building-level licensed practitioners would earn additional pay for achieving growth in student achievement. Variable pay would not be available until the 2003-04 school year but \$6 million is set aside next year to begin to build a fund for these awards. A greater percentage of the funds would be committed in future years.

A bill to be introduced next week by the Governor will provide options that respond to a number of concerns, including:

- Salary increases are not high enough. With the same \$40 million, more funds can be allocated to salary improvement. For example, there is little advantage in setting aside \$6 million next year for team-based variable pay if the plans could not be implemented for three years.
- The proposal allows alternative licensure for administrators and teachers (a 12-week course prior to teaching in the district for degreed individual). This is not part of the Pomerantz/Forsyth joint proposal and was not discussed in the bipartisan legislative work group.
- Variable pay funds would be set aside but not available until the legislature completes a variable pay study over the next two years.

The Governor's bill will more closely resemble the Pomerantz/Forsyth proposal and will be based on language developed in the bipartisan legislative work group. The bill should be available by the middle of next week.

Public hearing Monday, March 12, 2001

The most critical step now is for legislators and other policy makers to hear from parents, teachers, educators, administrators and citizens.

The House Education Committee will host a public hearing on Student Achievement and Teacher Compensation Monday, March 12, at 6 p.m. in the State Capitol House Chamber.

If you would like to speak at the public hearing, please contact the Legislative Information Office at 515/281-5129.

Fiscal 02 budget concerns continue

There is every indication that the Revenue Estimating Conference next week is going to project a significantly reduced growth rate for the state, and appropriations and budgeted appropriations for fiscal year 2002 (2001-02 school year) will need to be adjusted accordingly.

The Revenue Estimating Conference is made up of the state's auditor (Richard Johnson), Legislative Fiscal Bureau director (Dennis Prouty); and Department of Management director (Cindy Eisenhower). The REC meets quarterly to review state tax receipts and monitor our revenue; they then provide estimates to state leaders so department appropriations and expenditures can be adjusted to be more in line with receipts.

Success4 helps students

As several incidents of student violence made headlines this week, I am reminded again how important it is to teach and model good social and development skills to help us establish safe communities for our kids.

One of Iowa's best examples is our Success4 program. This school improvement initiative is an integrated enterprise in the sense that it helps schools and communities work together to address the four primary aspects of the child development process: social, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual. By proactively dealing with these issues as complete communities, our youth are taught the social, emotional, intellectual and behavioral skills that are essential to success in school and throughout life.

If you would like more information about Success4, please visit our Web site or contact the Department for our free video: 515/281-3176.

Grants available to innovative leaders

The State Board of Education has placed school administrative leadership as a top priority for the past two years. We recognize that the evolving school environment requires innovative leadership from administrators. Thus, the Department has developed the Iowa Innovative Leadership Initiative for

Administrative Preparation & Professional Development Grant Application.

The Innovative Leadership Preparation Program solicits applications for innovative content and delivery of administrative leadership preparation and professional development programs. The intent of the Department is to encourage innovative and creative pilots.

Grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000 are available to eligible applicants. Applications may be submitted only by consortium. A consortium consists of a local school district and/or an area education agency, an institute of preparation for educational administrators,

and/or a professional organization. The fiscal agent must be a public school district or an area education agency. The grant application is available on the DE Web site at state.ia.us/educate.

The deadline for applications is May 7, 2001. The length of the grant will be from July 2001 to July 2003.

There will be an ICN session in every AEA on March 28 from 9 to 11 a.m. to answer questions about the grant.

For more information, contact Lana Michelson, lane.michelson@ed.state.ia.us, 515/281-3954 or Jim Graeber, jim.graeber@ed.state.ia.us, 515/281-5663.S